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PROPOSED ANNEXATION OF HAWAII.

SPEECH

OF

HON. RICHARD P. BLAND,
OF MISSOURI,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 1898.

WASHINGTON.

1898.

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SPEECH

OF

HON. RICHARD P. BLAND.

The House having under consideration the joint resolution (H. Res. 239) to provide for annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States—

Mr. BLAND said:

Mr. SPEAKER: In entering upon a discussion of this important question at the present time, we should not forget the situation that confronts us. Whatever may be said with regard to the ultimate policy of this Government toward the Hawaiian Islands or as to the importance of that people and that country in relation to our own, this is not the time to enter upon any final disposition of that question. We are now in the midst of a war the prosecution of which was entered upon for a certain purpose.

The resolutions that passed this House and the other branch of Congress declaring war against Spain committed this Government expressly to the sole policy of freedom, disclaiming any intention of an aggressive warfare. Cuba, almost a part of our own territory, the most important island south of us, would be, as a part of our own territory, a means of defense in time of war far more important than the Hawaiian Islands. Yet in order that the civilized world might know, as well as our own people, that we had entered upon this contest in the interest of humanity, in the interest of freedom, and not in a spirit of aggression, we declared that the sole purpose of this war was to relieve the starving and distressed people of Cuba and to extinguish the barbarity of Spanish rule in that island.

Our war resolutions explicitly stated that we entered on no war for conquest, and that we would not annex the Island of Cuba, but would give free government to her people. That was the

declared purpose, and that only. For that purpose, and that purpose only, have we voted to supply the Army and the Navy of the United States. For that purpose, and that purpose only, have the American people sanctioned unanimously this war as being a holy war.

Why, sir, if it had been contended here when we were entering upon this contest that it was intended for aggression for the seizure of the Hawaiian Islands, the maintenance of our sovereignty in the China Sea, that it was intended to make alliances with other great governments in order to participate in the partition of China and to make aggressions in the Asiatic waters—meaning thereby not only \$500,000,000 of interest-bearing debt, but probably four times that amount, meaning thereby not only increased taxation upon the people of this country to the extent of \$150,000,000 annually for a temporary purpose, but a debt of at least \$3,000,000,000 increased taxation for a purpose without limit and without termination—I doubt if this House or the Senate would ever have made a declaration of war under such conditions. And, sir, to bring forward this policy now and to urge this measure as a war measure is simply to write on the statute books of this country a falsification of the very declarations that we made in going to war.

A war measure! There is no Spanish fleet threatening the Hawaiian Islands. No one pretends that the possession of those islands is necessary now as a defense of our coasts. But, on the contrary, Mr. Speaker, we have assembled to-day at San Francisco a fleet ready to transport troops and supplies to the Philippine Islands; all of our war ships are practically leaving that coast and going to the defense of Dewey in the Philippine Islands because we need no defense on that coast.

If we had any use or shall have any need of a base for coal supplies and a harbor of refuge at Hawaii, we have all that now in the Sandwich Islands. By treaty we are in possession of Pearl Harbor, the only harbor on the Sandwich Islands that is suitable for this purpose. We have the sole sovereign control of this harbor, even to the exclusion of the Government of Hawaii. We now own and control a naval station on these islands. We need nothing more. Even admitting that there is or should be a necessity

for a coaling station there, we have that as completely and as effectually as we could have it by owning the islands.

Coal has never been found on the Hawaiian Islands, and a coaling station there must be supplied by transporting coal to the islands and storing it in our station there—a station that by treaty we have the exclusive right to fortify and hold against the world, and Pearl Harbor is the only place on the whole coast of Hawaii where such a station is at all feasible. No other nation can get such a station on these islands, for there is no other practicable harbor there to possess.

Why undertake to deceive ourselves or deceive the world by the hypocritical cry that Hawaii is necessary now as a war measure? No intelligent man believes such a statement.

No, sir, we started out protesting against the system of colonization. We have from the beginning denounced the idea of colonization. We started out for the purpose of wresting one of Spain's colonies from her rule, because our Government is hostile to the idea of people being dominated as a colony. In vindication of our antagonism to colonization and our position in favor of freedom our flag was to be planted by our Army and Navy upon the soil of Cuba. Now, on the contrary, that same flag—as a “war measure,” it is said—is to be taken and planted upon the Island of Hawaii without the consent of the people of that island. Such a policy is indefensible; and the plea which is put forward in excuse for it has no foundation in fact at the present time.

The gentleman from Nevada [Mr. NEWLANDS], who addressed this House a short time ago, undertook to put himself right on this question by disclaiming any idea of pressing this policy of colonization into the China seas or interfering with European complications. But he ought to know that this movement for the annexation of Hawaii is simply an entering wedge for such a policy. If not, Mr. Speaker, why can we not wait until this war is over and the people can take this question into consideration without reference to any of the complications existing at the present time?

The fact is, the Government of Hawaii as now constituted—not the people of Hawaii—has been knocking for some years at our doors. During two Administrations, or during a period begin-

ning at the close of one Administration and extending through the whole of another, that Government has been presenting itself here. But up to this hour, Mr. Speaker, there has been a steady refusal on the part of the Government of the United States to accept their treaty or their entreaties. In time of peace, when this question could be considered calmly and dispassionately, when no complications were involved, when no pressure could be made under militarism and military aggression, we have refused this offer.

But now, sir, taking advantage of a declaration of war and of a condition of hostilities with the bankrupt Government of Spain, under that pressure and in violation of the spirit in which the war was entered upon, a policy of aggression and a policy of territorial acquisition is urged. It will not do, Mr. Speaker. This Government, after having made its solemn declaration that this war was a war for humanity and for freedom, can not afford now to pervert it into a selfish policy of greed and oppression. It is dishonorable. It does not become a great nation like ours to perpetrate a deception upon its own people and upon others.

Now, Mr. Speaker, so far as the Philippine Islands are concerned, I do not believe there is a gentleman on either side of this House who is not more than willing and anxious to make complete and perfect the victory so gallantly won by Dewey, the most notable, probably, in the annals of naval warfare. We will not abandon the Philippine Islands until we get ready and in our own good time. But, sir, we do not need the Hawaiian Islands to hold the Philippines.

The Philippine Islands were a part of the territory of Spain. Dewey and his fleet being in Chinese waters, and leaving no other place where they could go, for the purpose of inflicting a crushing defeat upon the enemy and securing a base of operations, went into the harbor and fought that battle and won that glorious victory. That was legitimate war upon the enemy against whom we had declared war, war in the interest of freedom, war in the very spirit of our resolutions. Being Spanish territory, legitimately acquired, we will hold those islands until this war is over, and that problem can be then solved.

Solved how? I may not stop here to argue that question, but

there is only one true way to solve it. We can not sell the islands, because we have no right as a free people to undertake to sell a people or a part of a people we have conquered. They deserve the boon of liberty as much as do the people of Cuba; and if, in the providence of God, those islands are also freed and turned over to their own people for self-government as Cuba must be freed, it simply adds to our luster and does not detract from it.

But we can not honorably do anything else with those islands. We can not profitably hold them permanently, because the holding of them would involve us in all the diplomatic relations with European and Asiatic politics, against which entanglements we have from the beginning protested.

So far as Puerto Rico is concerned, I believe that it is the duty of this Government to drive Spain from that island and forever quit her dominion over it. Because we have begun a war against Spain, that is the Government which is proper to vanquish as far as possible in accomplishing our great purposes of liberty, and I say that the driving of the Spanish from the island of Puerto Rico is not only legitimate, but I believe it to be necessary for the peace and security of our country in the future.

Spain is a bad neighbor, but after we have extinguished the last authority of Spain in this hemisphere and practically established the Monroe doctrine, shall we abandon that policy and start upon the Asiatic seas, among Asiatic populations, in countries devoted to Asiatic civilization, unnecessary in peace, wholly unnecessary in war, and perpetrate the wrongs that will be perpetrated by the passing of these resolutions?

Why, gentlemen tell us that the Government of Hawaii favors this proposition. I use that word only as recognizing those having authority there—the representatives of a few thousand, probably three or four thousand among a hundred thousand—the white intelligent race ruling the Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese, as the intelligent white Caucasian race will rule the inferior race wherever they are brought together. You gentlemen on that side who have undertaken to make issues here against some of the Southern States upon this proposition show where you stand to-day when you are willing to countenance the government of an island by a few white people at the expense of extreme

domination over an inferior race. [Applause on the Democratic side.]

Hawaii is 2,500 miles from San Francisco, the nearest important port on our seacoast. Hawaii has a population of pure and mixed natives, 39,504; Japanese, 25,407; Chinese, 21,616; Portuguese, 15,291, or a total population of 101,818 that may be denominated as an inferior race. A large portion of this population we have by treaty and statute undertaken to exclude from our shores because they are undesirable.

There are British residents on the island, 2,350; Germans, 1,432; Americans, 3,080. Of the Caucasian race, which dominates and controls, there are only 6,762.

Under the constitution of Hawaii no one can vote without swearing to support that constitution, and it so happens that this constitution provides for annexing the island to the United States. This constitution was forced upon the people of the island by a handful of Americans, and has disfranchised all the inhabitants of the island who will not swear that they will vote to surrender their native land to another government before they are permitted to vote. This may be called a free ballot, but it has the appearance of a ballot offered to the voter in one hand with the condition of his voting that he surrender his birthright, and if he refuses this condition a sword is held in the other hand to strike down the ballot and to disfranchise the voter. It is a Government thus organized that presents the treaty that we propose to accept by the resolutions pending before this House. I deny that the people of the island have been fairly consulted in this transaction. It is a scheme to force a robbery, pure and simple, that we are called upon to sanction and enforce.

Mr. TAWNEY. Will the gentleman allow an interruption?

Mr. BLAND. I have but thirty minutes.

Mr. TAWNEY. I simply desire to ask whether you know that the Senate of Hawaii which ratified the treaty is composed largely of native Hawaiians?

Mr. BLAND. Oh, Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking of natives or foreigners. There are a few white natives. I am speaking of the population of that island, and especially the population to whom that island by nativity belongs. When the gentleman

presses that question, it is an admission that he has disfranchised them by the wholesale, and the pretense that they are presenting this treaty here voluntarily is a fraud and a lie upon its face.

Mr. TAWNEY. Do you not also know—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Does the gentleman from Missouri yield to the gentleman from Minnesota?

Mr. BLAND. I can not yield any further. I have not the time. The gentleman can speak in his own time.

Mr. TAWNEY. I simply wanted to call attention to the fact—

Mr. BLAND. I do not want to be discourteous to the gentlemen, but I have only thirty minutes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not here to denounce the American people upon that island for their Americanism. I am here, so far as justice and right will permit it, to uphold them and to turn to them our support for whatever sympathy they have given us in this struggle. If they have violated any of the principles of neutrality, if they have subjected themselves to any claim of damages from Spain, this great Government of ours stands ready to foot the bill four times over, if necessary.

When we come to treat with Spain we may have a much larger bill of damages than Spain can possibly present to Hawaii. Gentlemen know, and the ruling powers in Hawaii know, that they are perfectly safe in any favors they give to this great Government. Not only that, but they know that in the future, as well as in the past, this Government intends that no hostile power shall ever dominate over those islands.

That has been our pledge and our policy from the beginning. The resolutions to be offered by us as a substitute for annexation provides that we shall forever guarantee independence to the Sandwich Islands. This is a mere pretext thrown in here under the war spirit to perpetrate upon the people of this country what I conceive to be a wrong; not so much now in the acquisition of Hawaii as in what it looks to in the future for the acquisition of territory beyond.

Why, they tell us that the acquisition of territory is nothing new. That is very true. The policy of our Government heretofore, and its practice, has been to admit territory that was contig-

uous, until we have become a homogeneous people. All of our territory, except that which we acquired from Russia, is connected by land and subject to defense. The great land power of the world to-day is this country. The next great land power is Russia. No Government since 1812 has ever attempted to invade the United States of America.

No one has ever attempted to invade Russia since the disaster that overtook Napoleon in his retreat from Moscow. Here we are pursuing a policy of our own under the teachings of our fathers to abstain from all trans-Atlantic aggressions, complications, or alliances, building up for ourselves a compact territory, as far as honor will permit remaining at peace with all the world, and we have grown up to be the most powerful nation in the world by pursuing this policy.

To-day we are at war with Spain. And what has been the policy of Spain? Precisely the policy that we, by these resolutions, are invited to enter upon. But a short time ago in modern history Spain was the most powerful nation, probably, on earth. She had her colonies in every land and fronting on every sea. In Europe was her great Kingdom and its dependencies. The whole of South America practically was hers, and part of our own North America was under her flag.

These colonies and the support of them have brought Spain to ruin and bankruptcy. She is unable longer to continue that policy. The last of her colonies upon this continent are about to be taken from her, and nearly all upon the other. This is the policy which has brought ruin and disaster to her, so that she is hardly a respectable enemy in a conflict with a nation that has pursued the opposite policy, that has eschewed colonization and eschewed the idea that we must go over the world in order to map out colonies here and there as a place for American settlement and on which to plant the American flag, and by which we will be involved in large expense in order to maintain and defend them.

Here is the contrast of the two nations to-day. Let us not depart from our policy. This is a departure, and a dangerous departure.

Some one asked the question a while ago how these islands would be governed if we acquired them. It could not be answered.

No gentleman has undertaken to answer that question. It is left, I suppose, for the future consideration of Congress.

Suppose you had that question here now, as you will have it if you annex them. How are you going to govern them? Is it to free a people? No. You know you do not intend to do it. Do you intend to give the ballot to the people of Hawaii? You know you do not, although the Constitution declares that everyone born in the United States shall have the right to vote, that he is a citizen, at least, and shall not be disfranchised on account of race or previous condition.

Now, the question arises; When it becomes a part of the territory of the United States, and there are those born on that territory, what are you going to do with them? Are they citizens or not?

Mr. LANHAM. If the gentleman will permit me to interrupt him, would they not be subject to taxation if annexed to the United States? And if so, would they not logically be entitled to representation?

Mr. BLAND. Well, I think, as a matter of course, if we are to annex the Hawaiian Islands, and they are to be governed as citizens of the United States, we are bound to permit them to exercise all the rights of citizenship and the right of the ballot; because we have no right to tax them without representation.

The Constitution of the United States provides that every person born in the United States is a citizen thereof. It also provides that no citizen of the United States shall be disfranchised on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. An important question in this connection arises here. There are 39,504 natives on the island, nearly all of whom are of the inferior race. There are only 3,000 Americans. When Hawaii becomes a part of the territory of the United States what shall be said as to the legal status of these 39,000 natives? May they not claim the right of native citizenship, because the territory would then be a part of the United States? They would also be natives of that part of the United States.

It is true that at the date of their birth they were not natives of the United States, but so soon as the territory becomes a part of the United States they would claim and reasonably insist that

they are natives of this country. They would insist that the Constitution did not intend to confine nativity to the territory belonging to the United States at the time of the adoption of this amendment to the Constitution of the United States, but that it necessarily includes whatever territory might at any time come within the jurisdiction of the Constitution.

Also, what will be the status of the children born of Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese parentage? In other words, will not the native inferior race under the Constitution become voters so soon as the territory is admitted, and will not this fact place the whole Government in the hands of the inferior race beyond hope of redemption? Will such a population add to the glory and security of our institutions, or will not the superior race find some pretext to disfranchise the inferiors after they have been admitted, since we know they did that in order to form a treaty of admission?

Mr. SMITH of Arizona. Do not we do it in the Territories of the United States?

Mr. BLAND. But my friend must remember that in all the admissions of territory and annexation of territories, most of which was done by the policy of Jefferson and his Democratic confrères, it had been territory the climatic conditions of which was admissible for the Caucasian race, admitted for the very purpose of settlement by our own people and our own race, and all these admissions of territory of suitable climate and soil, and being contiguous, it was a fit home for the American citizen; and so it is with your Territory, and if you are not admitted as a State it is not because you are Chinese or Japanese, but because you produce silver. That is your crime.

But I say the same government would practically be introduced in Hawaii as there is now—a government that you on the other side of this House have denounced upon this floor. That is one where the intelligence and the property-holding element control. And they will find a way to control in that island as they have everywhere. But do you want any more such territories? Have we not enough now of race prejudice and race conflict in this country? This race question is not settled here, Mr. Speaker. It is one of the most perplexing problems in the future of this Govern-

ment to settle, and the more perplexities you add to it the more difficult and the more dangerous it becomes.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasing thing to jingoism, the idea of planting upon the seas war stations for the American flag! They believe that it is great and glorious; but it may end in a denial of suffrage to the people you acquire, to place them under the control of military governors and improvised Congressional legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have said that the future of Hawaii is somewhat perplexing. Of course we all understand that. We do not propose that they shall fall into the hands of another government hostile to ours. It is not necessary to annex them in order to carry out that policy. It is understood now. There is no danger of it.

The prime movers for the annexation of Hawaii boldly assert on this floor, and we find it everywhere in the plutocratic press of the country, that Hawaii is necessary to us in our new policy. This new policy is defined as being the permanent occupation of the Philippine Islands, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and whatever other territory we may conquer during this war, and more still, they tell us that we must make alliances with England and Japan, if not openly, then secretly, to the end that we may participate in carving up and parceling out the Chinese Empire.

They tell us that this must be done in order to push our trade in the Orient. We are to be brought immediately into conflict with France, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Austria in these enterprises. We are solaced with the assurances that there are no dangers of war. We are told that even if war should come, that the United States, England, and Japan could hold their own against the world. This is called our new destiny. Every intelligent man knows that all the nations that I have named are armed to the teeth. They present a military camp and they have immense navies. The laboring and producing people of these countries have been taxed in order to keep up these military establishments until they are mere slaves to plutocratic power as represented in militarism. Millions of them have come to our shores because we were exempt from the necessities of military rule.

They love our country because they find freedom here from the

enormous burdens and the degrading tyranny of the governments of the Old World. Shall we enter upon a policy that requires immense navies and standing armies and that involves the enormous taxation necessary to maintain them? If we are to prosecute this war for such purposes it will be a source of disappointment to the people who entered upon it in the interest of freedom and not of slavery. Such a policy as this is intended and is urged by its promoters for the purpose of building up in this country a centralized power of wealth with big standing armies and navies to protect this plutocratic control. When our people complain, as the taxpayer will complain, of the burdens thus imposed upon them, plutocracy expects to be able with military power to answer their petition, if necessary, with an array of bayonets.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. BLAND. I would like about five minutes more.

Mr. DINSMORE. I yield five minutes to the gentleman.

Mr. BLAND. And that is where this will lead to. That is why I object to it at this time. It is because the promoters of the annexation of Hawaii foreshadow a policy such as I have alluded to that I most strenuously object to the admission at this time.

I would oppose the annexation of Hawaii under any circumstances, but to annex Hawaii with the avowed purpose of using Hawaii as a precedent, and also as an aid to the acquisition and permanent occupation of colonies everywhere and for the purpose of entering upon schemes of imperialism, meets my earnest and emphatic protest.

You are simply on the road to despotism in this country in trying to free the little Island of Cuba. You are on the road to imperialism, with a large Navy and standing armies and oppressive taxation, oppressing labor by putting it down by the military, and adopting a military government instead of republican institutions and constitutional liberty. That is involved in this very discussion.

You may go on for a while under the military spirit and excitement of war, but the day will come for reckoning when your bills are to be footed, when your taxes are to be paid, when bond after bond is to be issued, and when the starving labor begins to "cry

‘Peace,’ when there is no peace.” Your day of reckoning will come, and I call a halt now, for now is the time.

Some gentlemen have spoken to me about leprosy and lepers. Why, Mr. Speaker, I have not time to go into all these questions. No intelligent man here can be deceived as to the population of the Hawaiian Islands. Any intelligent man here knows that they are not our equals in any sense of the word. They do not comprehend our system of government. They are wholly incapable of understanding it. Yet they are entitled to freedom.

It does not matter whether they can govern themselves as well as we can or not. They are entitled to try the experiment of self-government. It belongs to them, or else the Declaration of Independence is a lie in itself. And so it is with Cuba, so it is with Puerto Rico, so it is with the Philippine Islands. We can do no more than to turn over whatever territory comes under our jurisdiction to their people, free to do with it as they please. And if in the providence of God they are capable of self-government, they will succeed. Above all, our consciences will be free and our liberties not endangered. [Applause.]

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